DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 255 982 EA 017 136

TITLE Student as Disciple.
INSTITUTION National Catholic Educational Association, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 34p.; For related documents, see EA 017 134-138. The buttons referenced have not been included due to photocopying limitations.
AVAILABLE FROM National Catholic Educational Association, Publication Sales, Suite 100, Washington, DC 20007.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Catholic Educators; *Catholic Schools; *Discipline; Elementary Education; *Religious Education; Resource Materials; *Student Role; Student School Relationship

ABSTRACT

This kit, the third publication in a five-part series on the educational "ministry," offers elements designed for Catholic school faculty, parents, and students. The kit contains an article on the nature of discipleship; a booklet with prayer services, scripture references, liturgies, and sacramental preparation; three prayer cards; three posters; two student buttons; and plan and timeline for use. The purpose of the kit is to stimulate thinking and discussion about discipline and discipleship within Catholic education. It is intended to help faculty, parents, and students focus on the topic of discipline, especially as outer-directed discipline can be developed into self-discipline and guided toward discipleship. (MLF)

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Purpose of This Kit

The purpose of this kit is to stimulate thinking and discussion about discipline and discipleship within Catholic education. It will help focus anew on the topic of discipline, especially as outer-directed discipline can be developed into self-discipline and guided toward discipleship.

The *Student as Disciple* Kit, the third in a five-part series, follows naturally upon *The Principal as Prophet* reflective booklet and *The Teacher as Minister Daily Plan Book.*

Permission to Adapt or Reproduce

The *Student as Disciple* Kit offers elements designed for faculty, parents, and students; but the elements must become yours. To facilitate that, we give permission to the purchaser to adapt and/or to reprint any of the printed materials for use within his/her own school and/or parish We not only permit but even encourage the purchaser to adapt the slide presentation, replacing some of the slides with appropriate local scenes. Some of the materials may be purchased in quantity for easy, attractive distribution to faculty, students, and parents.

NCEA's Department of Elementary Schools offers this kit to you; we hope you will complete it with your time, interest, prayer and creativity.

Suggestions for Use

Only you can design the best way to use this kit within your school and/or parish community. A small committee (e.g., one or two teachers, principal, DRE, a parent)—after examining the materials—could plan an approach suited to local time and needs.

The ideas related to sacramental preparation should, of course, be correlated with local preparation for the Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Confirmation. For all other components, this general guide and possible timeline may prove helpful:

August

- Slide/cassette introduction for faculty, followed by suggested discussion
- Brief discussion on poster #1, "To be disciplined is to follow in a good way; to be self-disciplined is to follow in a better way"
- Distribution of article, "The Student as Disciple" for reading before September faculty session

September

- Faculty session on the article, "The Student as Disciple," with suggested discussion points
- Classroom use of poster #1 with focus on the meaning of Corita's rule
- Theme related to Catechetical Sunday, if desired

October

- Student use of prayer cards at regular planned time
- Further faculty discussion on the article or application of the three characteristics of discipleship to various student maturity levels
- Slide/cassette introduction for parents, followed by suggested discussion (Older students may be included.)
- Article, "The Student as Disciple," distributed to parents with plans for follow-up at next parent meeting

November

- Faculty prayer service and brief discussion of poster #2, "Now is the time to become a disciple"
- Classroom use of poster #2 with focus on first characteristic of discipleship as appropriate to student maturity levels
- "Time to become" buttons distributed to students in some appropriate way to serve as reminders

December

- Faculty liturgy and brief discussion of poster #3, "By this love you have for one another, everyone will know that you are my disciples"
- Classroom use of poster #3 with focus on second and third characteristics as appropriate to student maturity levels

January

- Student prayer services
- "Leader" buttons distributed to students (may prefer to use at Confirmation time)

February

- Theme related to Catholic Schools Week, if desired

March

- Inclusion of theme in parent-teacher-student conferences
- Student liturgical celebrations
- Theme related to Lenten activities—dealing with discipleship, suffering, and resurrection

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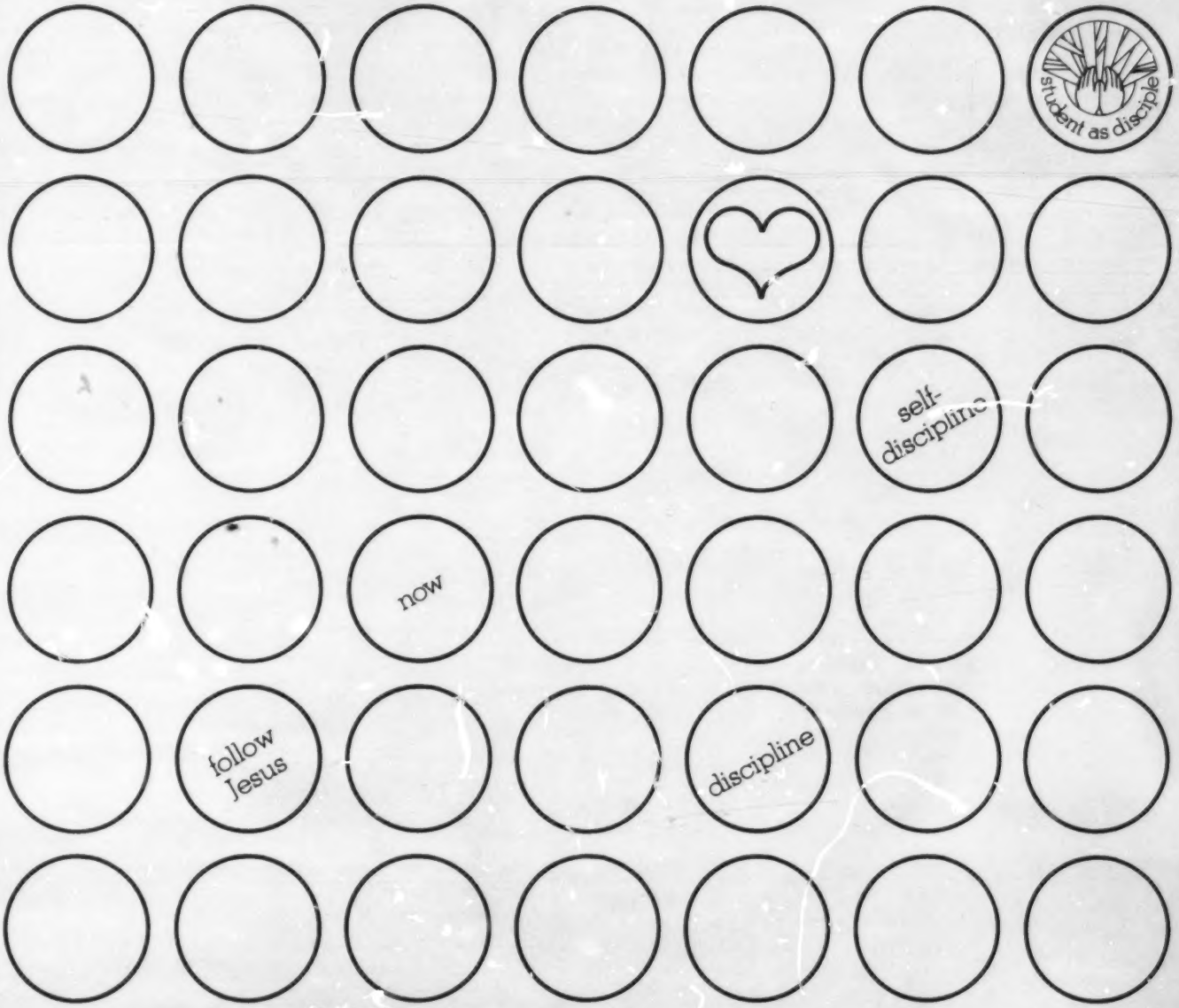
student as disciple

from discipline to discipleship



EA 017 136 (a)

the student as disciple

(A Scenario That Could Occur in Any Catholic School or Religious Education Classroom)

"O.K., perhaps what we need to do is find out what we're talking about. Larry, take the classroom dictionary and look up the word 'discipline'."

It was only three weeks into the new school year, and Mrs. Betty Calhoun, fifth grade teacher at St. Mary's Catholic School, was ready to give up on her class. They had just interrupted a lesson by laughing at something Joan Wells said. Mrs. Calhoun stopped the disturbance before things got worse. It was fifteen minutes till lunch and she decided to take the time to deal with "discipline."

Sister Mary Jane, the fourth grade teacher, had indirectly warned her. It wasn't that Sister deliberately criticized the class; she was too professional for that. Sister worked hard, and the students learned the material. But teachers know when one of them is having a tough time. It's written on the face and in the eyes. There's a worried dullness, a sadness, and even a hint of fear. Disappointment, frustration, and anger—usually hidden—find a brief expression in an unguarded glance, an off-hand comment after school, a slower walk, a dwindling enthusiasm.

By March of last year, everyone knew that the fourth grade was exceptionally difficult to handle. To her credit, Sister Mary Jane maintained a positive teaching environment—and her own sanity. But she enjoyed the summer much more than other years.

After three weeks, Mrs. Calhoun knew only too well why Sister had a difficult time last year. The class leaders established the pattern a long time ago; school was a game in which everything was supposed to be funny. By the time they reached fifth grade, they played the game very well.

As Larry went to the dictionary, Mrs. Calhoun was confident she knew the nature of the problem. But she wasn't sure she knew what to do about it. Should she be stricter, demand better behavior, and give out harder punishments? She didn't really want to resort to stronger procedures because she knew from nine years' experience that she was strict enough. Besides, she wasn't convinced that being stricter would actually solve the problem.

On the other hand, she couldn't become more permissive either. The students would take advantage of the situation, and matters would get worse rather than better.

She actually didn't know what she was going to do with Larry's definition of "discipline," but she hoped that she and the students could learn something that would help the situation.

While Larry was looking up the word, Mrs. Calhoun asked the class to guess what the definition would be. Denise Wilson suggested that discipline meant "making people do something they don't want to do." John Mulcahy added that discipline was "when you get punished for doing something wrong." The other students not only agreed, but they let it be known that there really wasn't much else to be said about it. Billy Gates yawned and looked out the window.

Betty Calhoun sighed more audibly than she wanted. "How does the dictionary define 'discipline,' Larry?" Larry was puzzled. He was a bright student and a good reader, but he hesitated.

When he read, he obviously didn't understand what he was saying. "**Discipline,** *noun,* instruction; training of the mind, or body, or the moral faculties; subjection to authority; self-control."

"What don't you understand, Larry?" Mrs. Calhoun asked.

"It doesn't make much sense. I don't get the connection between discipline and instruction."

"O.K., we can talk about that. Is there anything else in the definition the class doesn't understand?"

Larry had to read it two more times, and then Pam Jennings added that she didn't know why "self-control" was in the definition.

"That's the key idea in the definition," Mrs. Calhoun explained. "Discipline means self-control. That's the best kind of discipline—when people control their behavior because they know, inside, that doing something good is better than doing something bad. Some people, for example, are really convinced that kindness and respect are better than making fun of other people. But they are kind because *they want* to be kind, not because someone else tries to force them to be kind. It comes from *inside* the person, not just from *outside* the person.

"Larry, that's where 'instruction' comes in. We all need to be instructed, taught what doing good means. We learn good and bad behavior from other people. Our parents,

and teachers, our friends, T.V., older kids—they all instruct us in many ways about behavior."

Billy Gates yawned again and looked at John, hoping they could find something to laugh about. For once, John didn't return Billy's glance. Mrs. Calhoun ignored Billy and continued.

"So, 'instruction' and 'self-control' are both very important parts of discipline. When we're young, we need lots of instruction because we don't know what kind of behavior is good and what is unacceptable. As we get older, the instruction part should become less because we are able to channel our behavior by self-control.

"In other words, more instruction is needed when a person doesn't have self-control or self-discipline. But the goal of all discipline is to help a person achieve self-control. To know what is the right way to behave and then to behave that way—that's what self-control means."

Mrs. Calhoun stopped. The faces of her students told her that her comments on discipline got a mixed review. There were a few flickers of understanding and agreement. The majority partially understood and partially agreed, but a few didn't understand, agree, or care. She regretted that the whole discussion had come up so quickly and promised that she would pursue the topic again after she developed a lesson plan based on the dictionary definition. She decided not to continue the discussion now both because it was getting too close to lunch and because enough had already been said.

"We'll follow up on this discussion some other time. Remember, the best discipline is self-discipline. Larry, let me see the dictionary; I want to take a look at that definition one more time."

Larry handed her the book, and as she scanned the page for the word, she noticed something. The word immediately preceding "discipline" was "disciple." Her curiosity led her to read both definitions. She checked out the etymology of both words and found, to her surprise, that they came from the same Latin root. She had never put the two words together before, but she knew, at that moment, that they were connected.

She turned to the class with a little more enthusiasm than usual and announced: "Yes, we will continue this discussion on discipline. There's a lot more that we can say and learn about it. Some of it might even surprise you."

Billy Gates didn't seem too impressed, but the rest of the class didn't object openly or make a joke out of the promise to discuss it again. Mrs. Calhoun evaluated this morning's session as "successful."

As the class was leaving the room for lunch, their teacher was thinking about discipline and its connection with discipleship. "Interesting," she kept saying to herself, "that's really very interesting."

Trying to solve a "discipline problem" is one way to discover the discipleship of students. The practical and sometimes difficult experience of guiding, promoting, supporting, and, at times, controlling the behavior of students occupies a large portion of the time and energy of many teachers. How should a teacher handle a difficult student or a class like Mrs. Calhoun's fifth grade?

Answers do not come easily, and adaptations to the age and culture of the student, the personality of the teacher, and the philosophy of the school or religious education center are always necessary. There are a variety of techniques and approaches to discipline, but the goal of discipline should always be directed towards the ultimate ability of the student to achieve and experience self-discipline. Going from other-directed discipline to self-directed discipline is one way to describe the process.

A Catholic school has the distinct advantage and the unique opportunity to explicitly incorporate a religious dimension into the school experience. This faith perspective is not an "added-on" feature like a religion course, an occasional Liturgy, or a prayer before class. In a good Catholic school, faith is not "added-on"; it is the basis of the school community. It is the heart of the philosophy and the soul of the school. Our faith guides and illuminates what we do, how we do it, and why we do it. Without sacrificing the goal of academic excellence, the good Catholic school includes a genuine commitment to fostering maturity in faith, a vision of hope, and an experience of love.

A religious education program designed for those Catholic students who attend public schools has the same general goal as the Catholic school. This program, too, fosters maturity in faith, a vision of hope, and an experience of love. In both approaches, the focus should be on proclaiming the Good News of Jesus, experiencing community, and learning to serve. Cooperation and mutual support should characterize the relationship between schools and religious education programs.

It is not surprising, then, that religious education and Catholic school personnel—students, faculty, parents, catechists, principal, DRE, and staff—should think of themselves in terms drawn from the Christian faith. Explicit use of these terms, and the faith-realities they express, not only reflect our faith but they contribute to a growing awareness that we are who we say we are.

The parent as witness is one such term. The implication in this term is that parents, by their words and their example, are the primary religious influence on their children. Prayer, faith, and Gospel values are communicated to children through parents.

Although the effect of their influence is without parallel, parents should be supported in their responsibility by the parish community. Catholic school teachers are one group who support parents in guiding children to maturity in faith. As such, teachers are ministers. In this same context, it's helpful to think of students as disciples. All of these terms—parent as witness, teacher as minister, and student as disciple—can aid us in our attempt to know and to do God's will.

Viewing students as disciples reflects genuine Christian beliefs and can contribute to living the message, building the community, and serving other people. But this view must include more than learning a new phrase. The term must reflect the reality.

To say that the student is a disciple does not mean that other people are not disciples. In a real sense, all Christians are and must be disciples. We are all learners of the Lord; we all need to search the Scriptures and our Tradition for the living presence of God in our lives. We are all called and challenged to follow Jesus, and we never leave the ranks of discipleship. In fact, the joys and sorrows, the demands and rewards of discipleship are probably experienced most fully only when a person becomes an adult.

But there is a very real sense in which we can view our students as disciples. People who count these things tell us that the word "disciple" is used about 250 times in the New Testament. Occasionally, particularly in Matthew's Gospel, the disciples are identified as the twelve Apostles. At other times (Lk. 10:1-20), disciples are people who are more than followers of Jesus but less than the Apostles.

The most common use of the term "disciple," however, is the one which applies most directly to students. A disciple, in this sense, is a person who puts himself/herself in the "school" of a teacher and shares that teacher's view. In the Jewish setting of Jesus' day, the teacher was a Rabbi and the disciples were the "learners." The disciples were expected to learn the law and the tradition by repeating the exact teaching of the Rabbi. A good memory was essential.

Jesus demanded even more than the traditional Rabbi. Jesus asked His disciples for a complete personal transformation and commitment. To believe in the teachings of Jesus also meant to abandon selfishness, accept suffering, and become a witness to the Master's life, death, and resurrection.

Our students, those in our Catholic schools and religious education programs, are disciples in the sense that they are called to learn about Jesus and to "learn Jesus" in a formal educational setting. This is not the only situation in which they can learn Jesus (family, friends, Liturgy, parish, etc. are other settings), but the school or other Catechetical program provides the most explicit, formal situation in which these students can become disciples.

Discipleship is as complicated and full of mystery as any other personal relationship. However, some characteristics of this discipleship can be identified. The chart on page 5 describes some of these characteristics and how they apply to students.

The Student as Disciple

Characteristics of a Disciple	Application to Students
Calling: A disciple is someone who responds to the call from Jesus to be His follower. It is a call to greater faith in Jesus as our Savior, and to a life of hope even when there are good reasons for discouragement. It is a call to love all people and to believe that such love is one way to also love God. The initiative is from Jesus. The disciple strives to hear and understand the call more clearly, and to respond in word and deed more faithfully.	**Calling:** Most of our students have not yet fully recognized the call of Jesus and the meaning of their own response to that call. Our task is to help clarify the call and encourage the faith response. The call to discipleship is not a one-time event; it is a continuing process. The teacher is a minister when he/she helps the students hear Jesus' call and answer that call in their daily lives. The students are disciples when they listen, believe, and act on that belief.
Personal Attachment to Jesus: A disciple is someone who has agreed to follow the person of Jesus. This attachment goes beyond intellectual agreement or knowledge. Discipleship expresses a bond with the person of Jesus and a willingness to conform to the values, conduct, and vision of the Master. A disciple also strives to love other people because of their inherent dignity.	**Personal Attachment to Jesus:** The teacher is a minister when he/she guides the disciple-student to an ever growing personal commitment to Jesus. While intellectual development is extremely important, it isn't necessarily true that the brightest student is the best disciple. For a student to develop an ongoing personal attachment to Jesus, that student must have an accurate image of Jesus. The teacher helps paint the picture of Jesus in the hearts of students. This picture, image, idea, or thought about the person of Jesus must develop as the student progresses through life. A sixth-grader's view of Jesus should not be the same as a third-grader's view. Students are disciples when they give evidence of their growing personal relationships with other people. Respect for others, a willingness to share, a serious attempt to learn to love, a desire to worship—all are signs of discipleship.
Destiny: A disciple is someone who shares in the destiny of Jesus. This destiny includes suffering as well as joy, and it concerns the continuing establishment of the kingdom of God.	**Destiny:** As disciples, our students should look to the future with hope and should work now to help bring about that future. What they learn and experience now has value in itself, but it must also be directed to the time when these students are adults and when they have even greater responsibility to contribute to the kingdom of God. Some form of suffering usually accompanies everyone's life. A disciple of Jesus learns how to understand and deal with suffering in the light of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The teacher is minister when he/she helps the disciple-students understand and deal with suffering in their lives and in the world. The students are disciples when they see their future not only in terms of heaven but also in terms of contributing to and giving witness to the kingdom of God among us.

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What does discipleship have to do with Mrs. Calhoun's fifth grade class—and all other classes and groups like it?

Discipleship provides the context in which discipline should take place. Discipline is the process by which a disciple assimilates the teaching of the Master. Discipline is what it takes to interiorize the message and personalize the relationship.

To view discipline as a part of discipleship should help Mrs. Calhoun work with her class. In this context, discipline is not equated with punishment, and it is not a negative reality. Discipline is essentially a positive experience. Its goal is not just to change or control behavior. Its primary purpose is to help in the process of forming disciples who express a certain faith, attempt to live according to Gospel values, and who therefore exhibit behavior that reflects this faith and these values.

Teachers who see themselves as ministers and their students as disciples are better able to function as witnesses to the Gospel and servants to the community. Discipline is not an activity that takes place "outside" Christianity. Teachers do not employ "discipline" to control behavior and then teach Religion to these "controlled students." No, discipline should be understood as part of discipleship and should reflect the goal of eventual self-discipline as a personal response to the call of Jesus.

In other words, teachers, even when they are explicitly dealing with discipline, should always be guided by their belief that the students are disciples of Jesus.

Mrs. Calhoun may not solve her "discipline problem" by thinking of her students as disciples. But she will be able to deal with that problem in its proper context. The primary reason why our schools and religious education centers exist is to provide opportunities for the students to mature in faith. "Disciple" is a very apt way to describe both the process and the goal of our educational efforts. Mrs. Calhoun can draw strength and support from her faith, the Gospel, and the Church as she teaches her students, even when she teaches "discipline."

The terms we use to describe ourselves are important. For teachers and catechists to think of themselves as ministers includes a whole series of assumptions and convictions about the Church, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Father, and themselves. To think of students as disciples implies a similar series of convictions. The use of these terms and the faith realities they express can contribute to a greater awareness of who we are, what we are called to, and what we should be doing.

Our students are disciples—not of ourselves, but of the Lord. We educators, along with other people, have the opportunity, the challenge, and the privilege to announce and nurture that discipleship. Jesus said it best: "Go, therefore and make disciples of all the nations . . . teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world." (Mt. 28: 19-20)

By Tom Smith
Director of Education
Diocese of Tulsa, Oklahoma

The Student as Disciple

Suggested Discussion Questions

For Faculty Discussion:

Faculty members should read the article "The Student as Disciple"

1.
"A disciple is someone who responds to the call from Jesus." How can a teacher help the students hear this call? This call is usually not "literal" in the sense that a student hears a specific voice from God. How does this call come to students? How do you as a teacher hear a similar call?

2.
"A disciple is someone who has agreed to follow the person of Jesus." How can a teacher help the students follow Jesus? This following includes knowledge about Jesus, but goes beyond information. How can a teacher provide accurate information about Jesus and His message? How can a teacher also lead the student into a more personal response to Jesus? How do you follow Jesus? A student's "image" of Jesus is central to his/her ability to respond personally to Jesus. How can a teacher help students identify, clarify, and, if necessary improve this "image" of Jesus? What is your "image" of Jesus?

3.
"A disciple is someone who shares in the destiny of Jesus." How can a teacher convey to the students that they have responsibilities now and in the future to help build the kingdom of God? How do you understand your responsibilities to help build the kingdom? How can a teacher help the students deal with suffering in their lives?

4.
How do you define "discipline"? Do you believe your students are capable of self-discipline? How do you describe your role in terms of discipline?

5.
In your own words, what is the relationship between discipline and discipleship?

For Parent Discussion:

1.
What is your opinion regarding discipline in school? How should it be enforced? What is its nature? What is the goal of discipline? Is discipline a positive concept or a negative one?

2.
Describe some typical discipline problems in your school. How should a teacher handle these problems?

3.
What is the relationship between discipline and discipleship? In what sense are students disciples of Jesus? How is discipline a part of discipleship?

4.
How can parents and the school work together more closely in developing a sense of discipleship within the students? In this context, how can parents and school work together on a coordinated, Christian approach to discipline?

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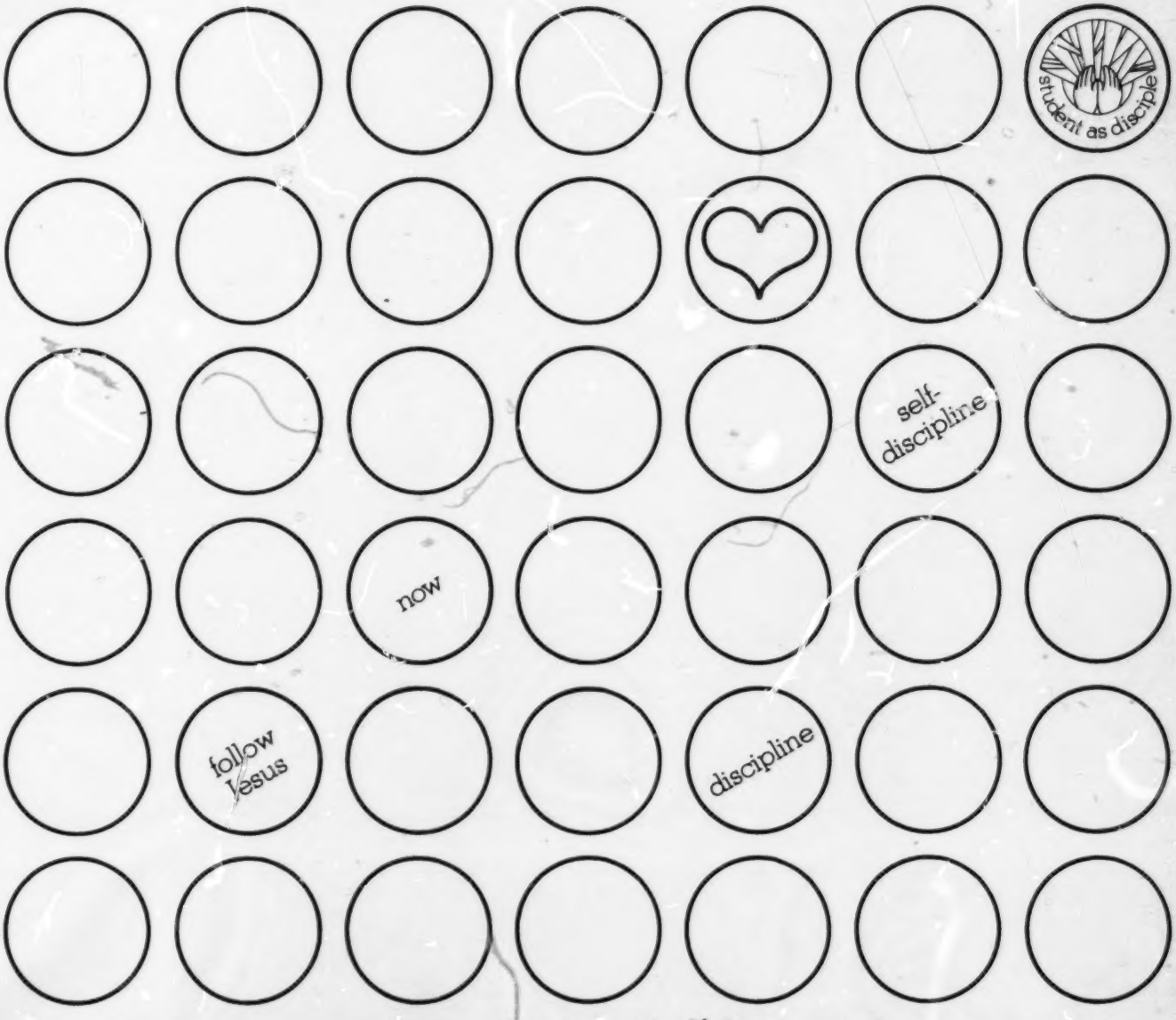
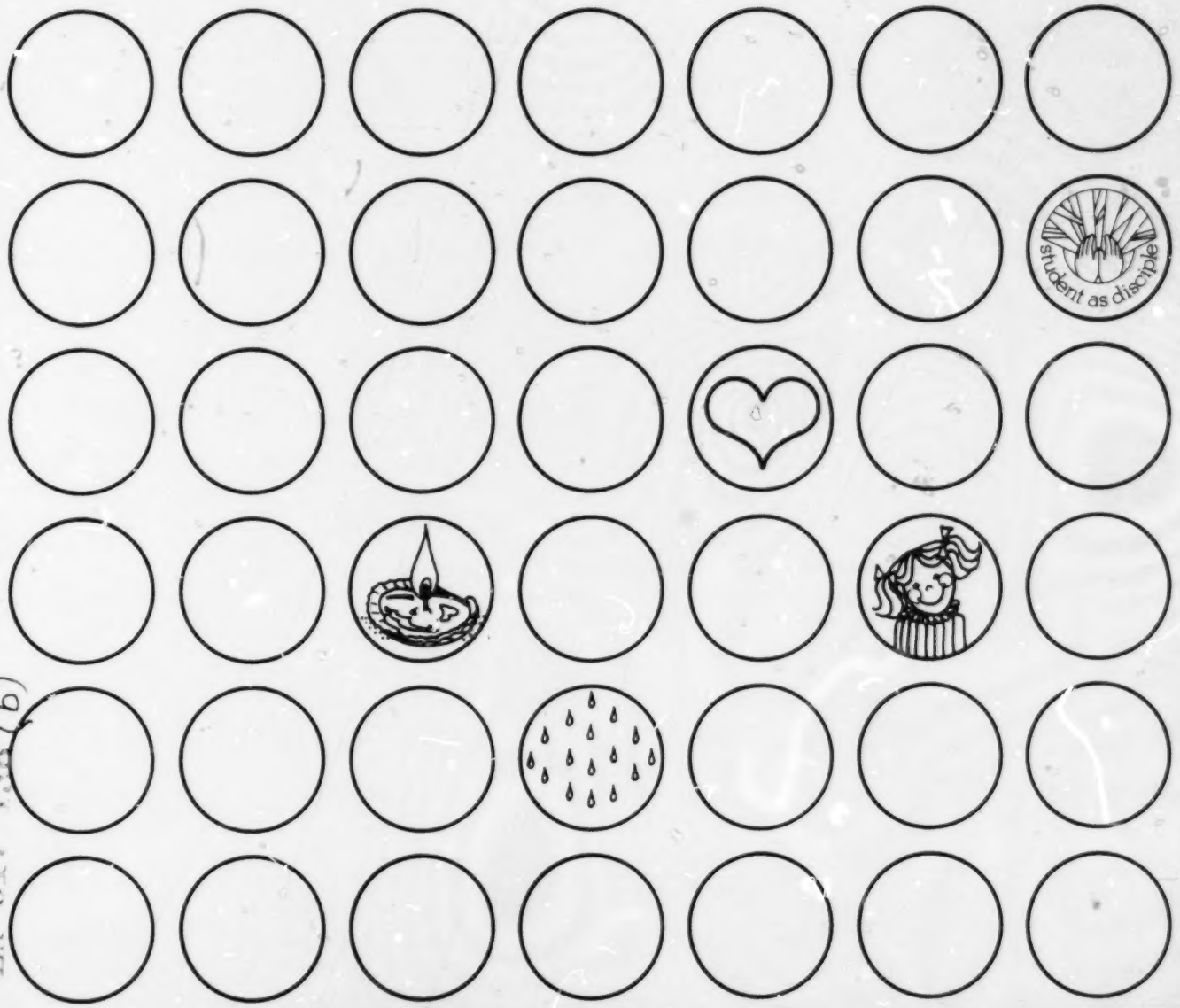


student as disciple

prayer services
scripture references
liturgies
sacramental preparation



EA 617 125 (b)

introduction

This booklet contains specific examples of ways to incorporate discipleship into the prayer life of your school or religious education program. Through prayer services and liturgies, faculty and students can come closer together as members of a sharing community—a community of disciples. Although suggested forms are offered, you will want to adapt the services to your faculty, your students, and the locality. For that reason, you are encouraged to modify or adapt the materials in this booklet so they best meet your needs.

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prayer service
faculty

Theme:
All Christians are to be disciples of Jesus, following His way, learning His truth, and living His life. The disciple listens to the Word of God in order to heed His call. The teacher ministers to his/her students by helping them discover and respond to their role as disciples.

Materials:
1.
Bible for each classroom
2.
Selected Scripture Phrases (See Scripture References on page 6 of this booklet.)
These phrases can be used in two ways:
a.
Small sea shell candles: each shell contains a typed line or phrase from Scripture. This paper is covered by colored wax with a small wick. The paper becomes readable as the wax melts.

b.
These brief Scripture ph ases can be typed or lettered on cards or separate pieces of paper and placed in a bowl or box.
3.
Christ-candle and Flowers

Preparation:
Prepare a room with candlelight or dimmed lighting. Teachers are to sit in a circle around a small table arranged with Bibles, candle, and flowers.

Leader/Celebrant:
Come, let us seek the Lord who speaks the word of life.

Song:
"Listen' (Monks of Weston Priory) or some other suitable song.

Prayer: (All)
Father, You call us, You call our students to discipleship. Enable us to hear Your word with eager hearts. Strengthen us to speak this Word with understanding and joy. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Reading/Reflection:
The Scripture reading is not a particular passage but a series of related phrases or verses from various sections in Scripture. The procedures are as follows:
1.
Sea shell candles: Each shell candle is lit from the Christ candle. As the Scripture passage appears through the melting wax, each teacher reflects on his/her phrase. (Soft music may be played.)
2.
Without sea shell candles: Each teacher takes one card or paper from a bowl. This card contains a phrase or verse as in #1.
3.
Reflection: Teachers are invited to comment on their phrase.
4.
Interiorization: As a step toward interiorizing this Scriptural phrase, each teacher is asked to memorize his/her phrase.
5.
Sharing: Each teacher is asked to state his/her memorized phrase to the whole group.

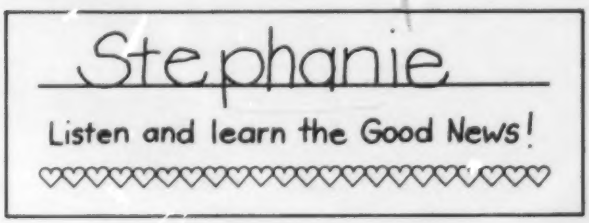
Action:
1
Leader/Celebrant:
The one brief Scripture phrase that each of us has made our own is only a small part of the Word of God. We are called to lead our student-disciples to the whole Word of God. As a symbol of this Word, each teacher will receive a classroom Bible. As you receive this Bible, your response will be to speak your phrase.
2.
Distribution of Bibles: Each teacher receives a Bible and responds with his/her Scriptural phrase:
E.g., Teacher: "Follow Me"
"Come and see"
"Come, see for yourself"
"Have no fear . . ."
"I am with you . . ."
". . . to build and to plant."

Closing Song:
"Trust in the Lord" (St. Louis Jesuits) or some other suitable song.

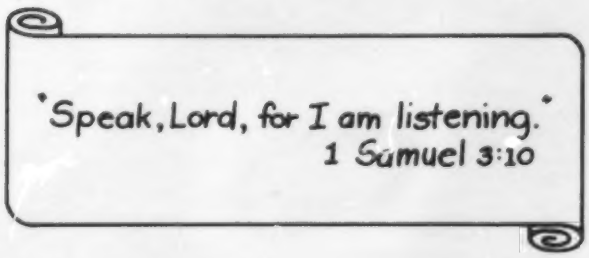
prayer service
grades 1-4

Theme:
Jesus calls us to be His disciples—to be learners of Him. A disciple of Jesus listens to Him in order to be like Him and to speak to others the truths learned.

Materials:
1.
Bible
2.
Small Cards with each student's name printed boldly. The following phrase is also printed on the card. "Listen and learn the Good News!"



3.
Christ Candle (or paschal candle)
4.
Large Scroll with the following words:



5.
Double-sided Scotch Tape. Pieces have already been placed on the scroll. Place the Bible and Christ Candle on a small table toward the front and middle of the room. The name cards are also placed on the table. The room is arranged so the students can sit around the "Teacher/Celebrant." Securely fasten the scroll on a wall or chalkboard. If possible, the students should stand in the corners of the room waiting to be called to prayer.

Invitation to Prayer by Teacher/Celebrant:
Children, come, let us listen to our God.

Procession Song:
"I Heard the Lord Call My Name" or some similar opening song. Children could walk slowly to the center of the room singing the opening song.

Prayer:
Father, You call each of us by name. You ask us to listen to Your Word. You ask us to be Your friends and to tell Your truth. Help us to hear You. Help us to listen to Your Word. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Brother.

Reading:
I Samuel 3:3-10 (As the reading is being proclaimed, two students could pantomime the action.)

Homily:
Briefly emphasize the fact that God speaks. We must try to listen as Samuel tried to do. Point out that God calls each of us just as He called Samuel.

Action:
The "Teacher/Celebrant" calls each student by name and distributes the name cards with the words: "Listen and learn the Good News!" Each student receives the card and tapes it to the scroll. (Soft music may be played during this action.)

Closing Song:
Kumbaya (or some similar song)

Kumbaya

Touch our hearts, O, Lord, be with us
Touch our hearts, O, Lord, be with us
We are listening, Lord, be with us
O, Lord, be with us.

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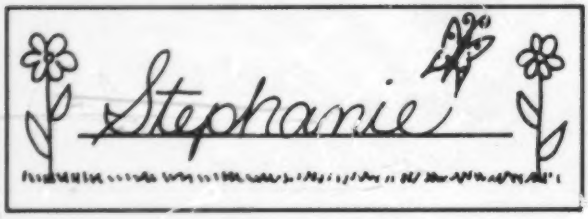
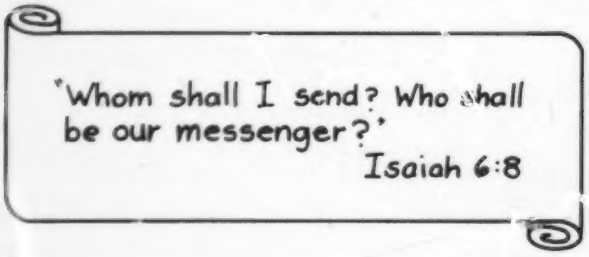
prayer service
grades 5-8

Theme:
Jesus calls us to be disciples—to be learners of Him. A disciple of Jesus listens to Him in order to be like Him and to speak to others the truths learned.

Materials:
1.
Bible
2.
Small Cards, each bearing one student's name. The card has also been decorated by the student.



3.
Christ Candle (or paschal candle)
4.
Large Scroll with the following words printed on it:



5.
Double-sided Scotch Tape. Pieces have already been placed on the scroll.

Preparation:
Place Bible, candle, and name cards on a table. The room is arranged so the students can sit around the "Teacher/Celebrant." Securely fasten the scroll on a wall or chalkboard.
If possible, the students should stand in the corners of the room waiting to be called to prayer.

Invitation to Prayer by Teacher/Celebrant:
Come, let us listen to and learn from our God.

Procession Song:
"I Heard the Lord Call My Name" or some similar opening song. Students could walk slowly to the center of the room singing the opening song.

Prayer:
Father, You call us each by name and You ask us to listen to Your Word. You invite us to be Your disciples and messengers who speak Your truth. Help us to hear You and open our hearts to Your Word. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Brother.

Reading:
Isaiah 6:1-13

Homily:
Briefly emphasize that a disciple listens in order to speak God's word. God calls each of us; we can either listen to Him or ignore Him.

Prayer of the Faithful:
Individual students could pray a prepared petition. Prayers for current local needs could be included in addition to voluntary, spontaneous prayers.

Response Song:
(optional) Any appropriate song could be sung.

Kumbaya

Touch our hearts, O, Lord, be with us
Touch our hearts, O, Lord, be with us
We are listening, Lord, be with us
O, Lord, be with us.

Action:
The "Teacher/Celebrant" calls each student by name and distributes the name cards. When all the students have received their cards, the "Teacher/Celebrant" begins the following invocations:

Teacher: As God called Isaiah to be His messenger, Jesus calls us to be His disciples. Will you try to answer this call from Jesus?

Students: I will.

Teacher: To be a disciple we must listen to the word of Jesus. Will you try to listen to His word in Scripture, in the teachings of the Church and from other people?

Students: I will.

Teacher: To be a disciple we must live the way Jesus wants us to live. Will you try to respect other people, be kind to all, and help each other in following Jesus?

Students: I will.

Teacher: May the Lord who calls you to be His disciple guide you as you try to follow His words.

Each student indicates his/her willingness to hear the call to discipleship by placing his/her name card on the scroll. (Soft music may be played during this action.)

Closing Song:
"Witness Song," "Go Tell Everyone" or some similar song.

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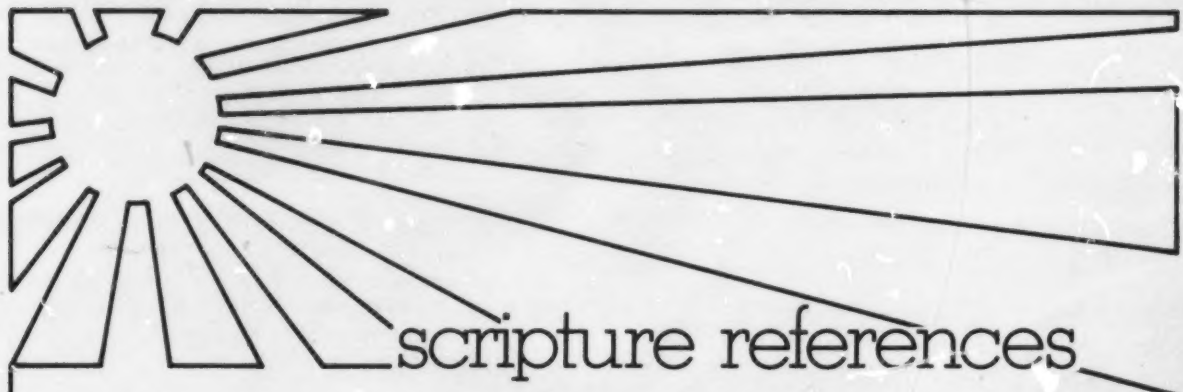

scripture references

Joshua	1:3-10	God calls us and is with us wherever we go.
Isaiah		Emmanuel Prophecies
	6:1-13	Call of Isaiah
	8:11-20	Disciples of Isaiah
	9:1-6	Prince of Peace
	41:9-13	"I am with you, fear not . . ."
Jeremiah	1:4-19	"I dedicated you . . ."
Acts	6:1-7	Disciples Appointed
Mark	2:14-20	Call of First Disciples
Luke	9:23-27	Conditions of Discipleship
	10:1-20	Mission
John	1:35-51	The First Disciples
Isaiah	43:1-21	"I have called you by name . . ."

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liturgy
faculty

Introduction:
Disciples bring the love of Jesus to others by their actions and by using their talents (e.g., *peacemaking).* In Baptism, God makes a promise with us that brings us into the Christian Community. Our response to the Baptismal promise, which the rainbow signifies, is our discipleship.

Theme:
A Call to Discipleship: I am called to witness the love of Jesus to others.

Materials:
1.
List of names of staff members (1 list per person)
2.
Separate pieces of paper with the names of all staff members put in a hat or box
3.
Rainbow puzzle pieces for banner. See page 8 for pattern
4.
Rainbow banner
Suggested verses
a.
Sirach 43: 11-12
Behold the rainbow! Then bless its Maker, for majestic indeed is its splendor; It spans the heavens with its glory, this bow bent by the mighty hand of God.
b.
"Send me, but where? to do what?"
5.
Candles of assorted colors—1 for each staff member

Before Liturgy:
Each staff member receives a list of names of co[illegible]kers. After reflecting on each person's gifts and talents, the participants jot down those gifts and talents by each individual's name. (E.g., Mary Stewart—organizer, empathetic. Bob Jones—creative, unselfish, motivator.) Allow sufficient time to complete the list; then pass the hat or box around and ask each person to draw a name. Then each may share his/her reflections with the person whose name was drawn. (E.g., "Mary, you are a great organizer, we really need you!")

Opening Song
1.
We gather here together today in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now let us listen and always be present . . . to this day and this time, remembering that He said, "I will never forget you—I have called you by name and you are mine."
2.
"I Have Called You By Name" by Carey Landry

Suggestion:
The handshake of Peace after the Penitential Rite

Suggested First Reading:
I Corinthians 12: 4-13 or Colossians 3: 12-17

Responsorial Psalm:

—Teach Me Your Ways, O Lord
Your ways, O Lord, make known to me.
Teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior.
—Teach Me Your Ways, O Lord
Remember that your compassion, O Lord,
and your kindness are from of old.
In your kindness, please have mercy
because of your goodness, O Lord.
—Teach Me Your Ways, O Lord
Good and upright is the Lord;
Thus He shows all people the way.
He guides the humble to justice.
He teaches the humble His way.
—Teach Me Your Ways, O Lord

or:
"There's A Time, There's A Moment," record by Ellis & Lynch

Gospel Acclamation:
—Alleluia
(Said or sung) God is love and he who abides in love, abides in God and God in him.
Alleluia, Alleluia

Gospel:
John 13: 33-35 or John 15:16

Reflections on the Meaning of Discipleship:
(You may choose to use the visual reflection on page 8 as a Homily.)

Petitions:
Spontaneous

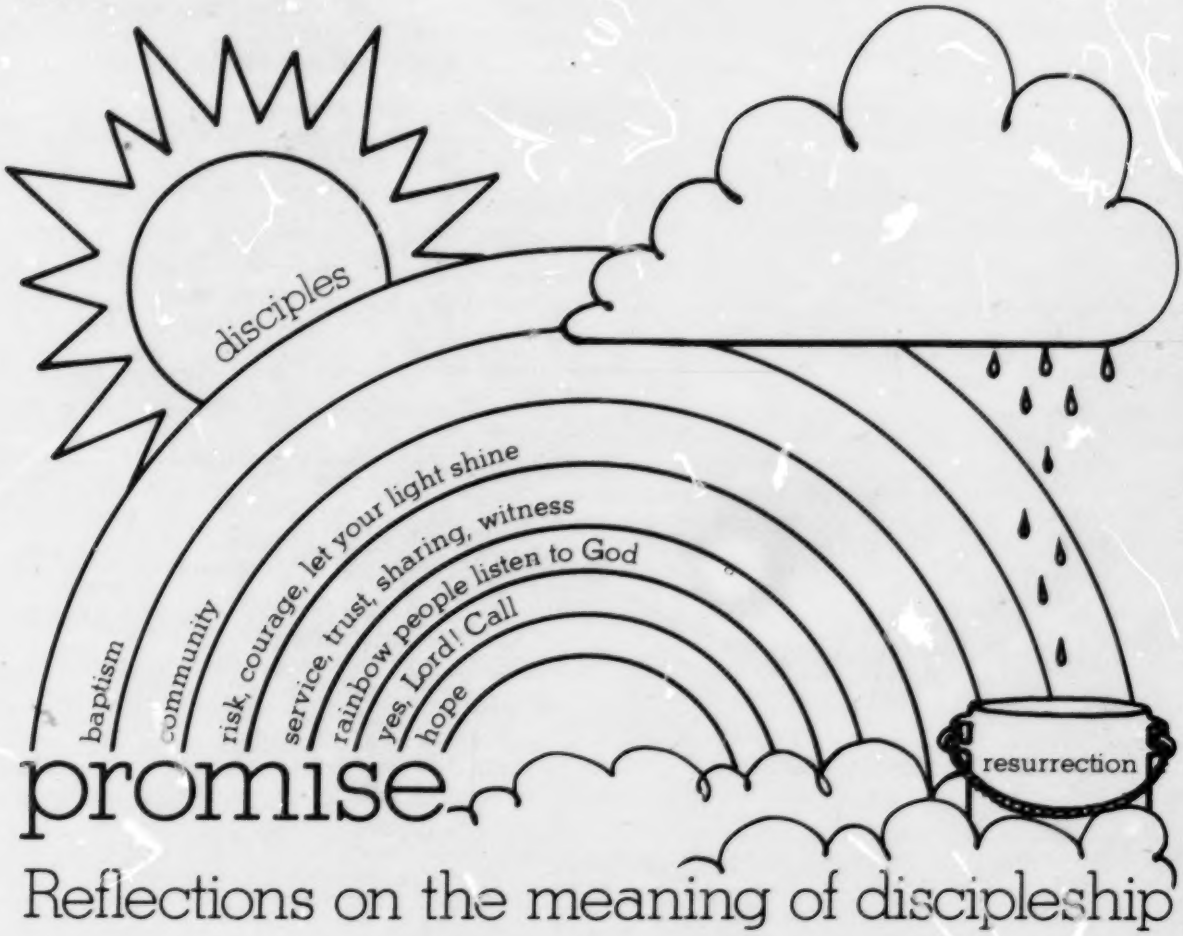
Presentation of Gifts:
Bring up pieces of rainbow puzzle and put together on banner. (Masking tape already put on the back of each piece will help things go smoothly. Please refer to illustration and directions attached.)

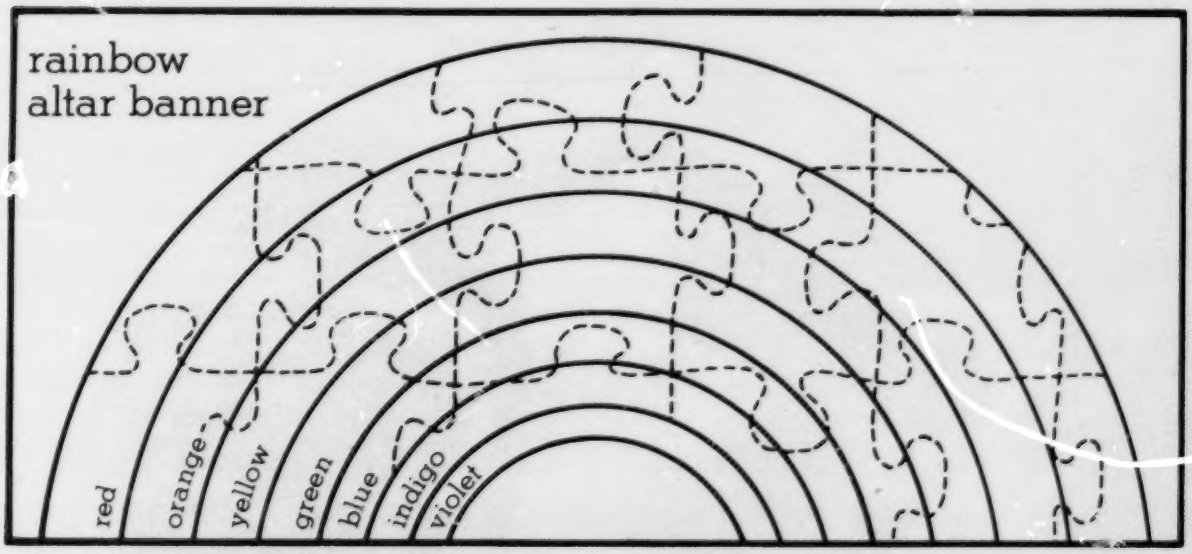
Song During Presentation:
"Take, Lord, Receive," from *Earthen Vessels* album by St. Louis Jesuits or "Wherever You Go," from *Wherever You Go* album by Weston Priory Monks

Communion Songs:
"Bread, Blessed & Broken," from *Day of the Son* album by Dameans or "Be Not Afraid," from *Earthen Vessels* by St. Louis Jesuits

After Communion:
Each participant comes up to the altar, receives and lights a candle and says, "I, _____, am called to witness the love of Jesus to others." The participants return to their places with their candles for the singing of the ending song.

Ending Song:
"Witness Song," from *Tell the World* album by Dameans or "Day by Day," from *Godspell* or "God's Blessing Sends Us Forth"





Use an opaque projector to draw a rainbow.
Color the stripes.
Cut enough pieces so each participant has one.

It might help to have a base banner or cardboard with pieces outlined, to aid in assembling.

liturgy
grades 1-4

Introduction:
Disciples bring the love of Jesus to others by their actions and by using their talents (e.g., peacemaking.) In Baptism, God makes a promise with us that brings us into the Christian community. Our response to the Baptismal promise (which the rainbow is a sign of) is our discipleship.

Materials:
1.
Large drawing of clubhouse on butcher paper approximately 6' x 4.' Trace the pattern on page 10 with an opaque projector. Do not trace the items to be filled in during the Readings. (These appear lighter in the drawing.)
2.
Bible
3.
Candles of assorted colors (one per class)
4.
Record player and record, *Rainbow People,* by Sadlier
5.
Pins and membership cards for each child
6.
Felt pens
7.
Eucharistic Prayer for children
8.
Rainbow streamers made with crepe paper and yard sticks

Preparation:
The clubhouse should be hung where it is visible to all the children.
This liturgy should take place in a room with comfortable seating for children—(small groups, perhaps in a classroom.) A small table should be prepared with open Bible and a lit candle; a paraphrased copy of the reading from *Mark 16: 15-16*—Each of us belongs to our very own family. God wants everyone to belong to His family, the Church. So Jesus said, "Go to the whole world, tell the Good News to everyone."

Liturgy:
Greeting: After knocking at the door, the children are greeted by the teacher, led into the room and seated on the floor.

Opening Song:
"Rainbow People" from Grade One Religion, Sadlier. The song is followed by short discussion of the theme: All people belong to God's special family.

Readings:
(All stand)
Mark 16: 15-16—He said to them, "Go to the whole world and preach the Gospel to all mankind. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned."
(All sit)
During a discussion of the readings, the following points will be considered and the various parts of the clubhouse will be filled in according to the directions given on the illustrated sheet. (See page 10.)
A. Name of Club—God's Special Family (on door)
1.
What two special families are named in the reading and the song?
2.
Shall we use "God's Special Family" as the name of our club? (Print the words on the door.)
B. Password—Baptism (on window)
1.
How did we become members of this special family or club?
2.
Every club has a password. Shall we use Baptism for our special word? (Print the word on the window.)
C. Rules of God's Special Family or Club
1.
All clubs have special rules. What rules must we follow in God Our Father's Special Family? (Write the rules on the banner that hangs on the front of the clubhouse.)
2.
If we break some of the rules how do we get back into God's Family or Club? (We say, "I'm sorry," and mean it.) (Add the words to the banner.)
D. Flag—Symbols of Baptism
1.
Discuss types of flags:
a. American Flag
b. Scout Flag
2.
We have a special flag on our clubhouse
3.
What symbols are we going to put on it?
4.
What are some of the symbols we used during Baptism? (candle, water, stole) (Draw these on the flag.)
5.
What special words does the priest use during Baptism? (I Baptize you . . .) (Add the words to flag.)

Since all of you belong to God's Special Family, the Church, how many of you would like to renew your membership today?

As I call on each of you to give me your name, I will put it on our Clubhouse roof. Then you may pick up your membership card, put your name on it and pin it on yourself.

Closing:
As the children finish filling out their cards, they reassemble for the closing prayer.

All Stand. Repeat closing prayer after teacher.

Before time began, you knew me.
Before time began, you loved me.
Before time began, you called me by name.
Thank you, God, for choosing me to be in your Special Family Club. Amen.

Note:
The children now process into the Church to join the other members of God's Family to finish the Liturgy.

Procession Song:
"This Little Light of Mine"

Petition:
Spontaneous

Presentation of Gifts:
Symbols of Baptism (i.e. water, candle, stole). Children may wish to bring up altar cloth, flowers, and candles to prepare the altar for the celebration.

Songs During Presentation of Gifts:
"What Makes Love Grow" from *Hi God,* Album I
"His Banner Over Me" from *Hi God,* Album I
"Peace Is Flowing Like a River"

After Communion:
Teacher from each class goes up and lights class candle, then returns to stand with his/her class.

Closing:
"Giant Love Ball" from *Hi God,* Album I

We belong to the family of God through Baptism

Trace the pattern above with an opaque projector. Do not trace the items to be filled in during the Readings. (These appear lighter in the drawing.)

Write the name of the club on the door: "God's Special Family"

Put a password on the window: "Baptism"

Put homily symbols of Baptism on the flag: stole, water, candle, and "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit"

List the rules of the Club on the banner: "caring, love, sharing, sorrow, trust, forgiveness, hope, etc. . . . I am sorry"

Put your name on the roof as having been called to be a club member.

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liturgy
grades 5-8

Introduction:
Disciples bring the love of Jesus to others by their actions and by using their talents (e.g. peacemaking). In Baptism, God makes a promise with us that brings us into the Christian Community. Our response to the Baptismal promise, which the rainbow signifies, is our discipleship.

Theme:
I am called to witness the love of Jesus to others.

Materials:
1.
A Color of the Rainbow for each class: This color corresponds to the color of the candle each teacher received at the faculty liturgy.
2.
Bible (we suggest *The Way*) and Eucharistic prayers for children.
3.
Banners: flag of colors using crepe paper streamers and dowels or yardsticks, as illustrated above.
4.
Unlit Colored Candles (use the ones from the Faculty Liturgy). Each class is assigned the color of the rainbow that corresponds to the color of the candle.
5.
Decorations and Banners made by children (banners reflect children's choices).
Ideas: "I will never forget you." "I've called you by your name, you are mine!"
6.
Colored Spotlight or Color Wheel (if possible) set up to reflect colors on the altar.

Opening Music and Song:
"Fanfare for the Common Man" or "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord." Color wheel should be turning, one child from each class processes in with banner while music is playing.

Penitential Rite:
Have the students reflect on this question: How have we failed to be disciples?

Handshake of Peace:
After the Penitential Rite.

First Reading:
Allow students to choose one of the two readings or select their own.

Colossians 3: 12-17—Since you have been chosen by God who has given you this new kind of life, and because of His deep love and concern for you, you should practice tenderhearted mercy and kindness to others. Don't worry about making a good impression on them but be ready to suffer quietly and patiently. Be gentle and ready to forgive; never hold grudges. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Most of all, let love guide your life, for then the whole church will stay together in perfect harmony. Let the peace of heart which comes from Christ be always present in your hearts and lives, for this is your responsibility and privilege as members of His body. And always be thankful.

Remember what Christ taught and let His words enrich your lives and make you wise; teach them to each other and sing them out in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing to the Lord with thankful hearts.
or
Jeremiah 1: 4-9—The Lord said to me, "I knew you before you were formed within your mother's womb; before you were born I sanctified you and appointed you as My spokesman to the world."

"O Lord God," I said, "I can't do that! I'm far too young! I'm only a youth!"

"Don't say that," He replied, "for you will go wherever I send you and speak whatever I tell you to. And don't be afraid of the people, for I, the Lord, will be with you and see you through." (The students might want to act out the reading.)

Responsorial:
Teach Me Your Ways, O Lord (may be read or sung)

Your ways, O Lord, make known to me.
Teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth and teach me;
for you are God my Savior.

Teach Me Your Ways, O Lord

Remember that your compassion, O Lord,
and your kindness are from of old.
In your kindness, please have mercy
because of your goodness, O Lord.

Teach Me Your Ways, O Lord

Good and upright is the Lord;
Thus He shows all people the way
He guides the humble to justice.
He teaches the humble His way.

Teach Me Your Ways, O Lord

or use the record "There's a Time, There's a Moment," by Ellis & Lynch

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia (spoken or sung)

God is love and he who abides in love
abides in God and God in him.
Alleluia, Alleluia

Gospel:
John 15: verse 16—"You didn't choose me! I chose you! I appointed you to go and produce lovely fruit always, so

that no matter what you ask for from the Father, using my name, He will give it to you."
or
John 13: 33-35—Dear, dear children, how brief are these moments before I must go away and leave you! Then though you search for me, you cannot come to me—just as I told the Jewish leaders.

"And so I am giving a new commandment to you now—love each other just as much as I love you."

Homily:
Reflections on the meaning of discipleship. Remember student involvement is an excellent tool for helping children become disciples.

Presentation of Gifts:
Each class should think of a gift to give to the school; e.g., 4th grade—clean the playground once a week, 5th grade—serve as library aides, 6th grade—tutor younger students.

Celebrant calls students to bring gifts. A representative from each class walks up to the celebrant and offers the class gift. The celebrant announces the gift to all.

Gifts:
The altar will be prepared. Students will bring up at the Offertory:
table cloth
large candle
water
bread
wine
decorations

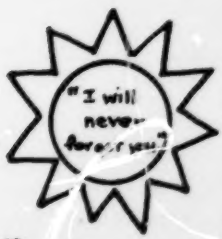
Song During Presentation of Gifts:
"All That We Have" or "All That I Am"

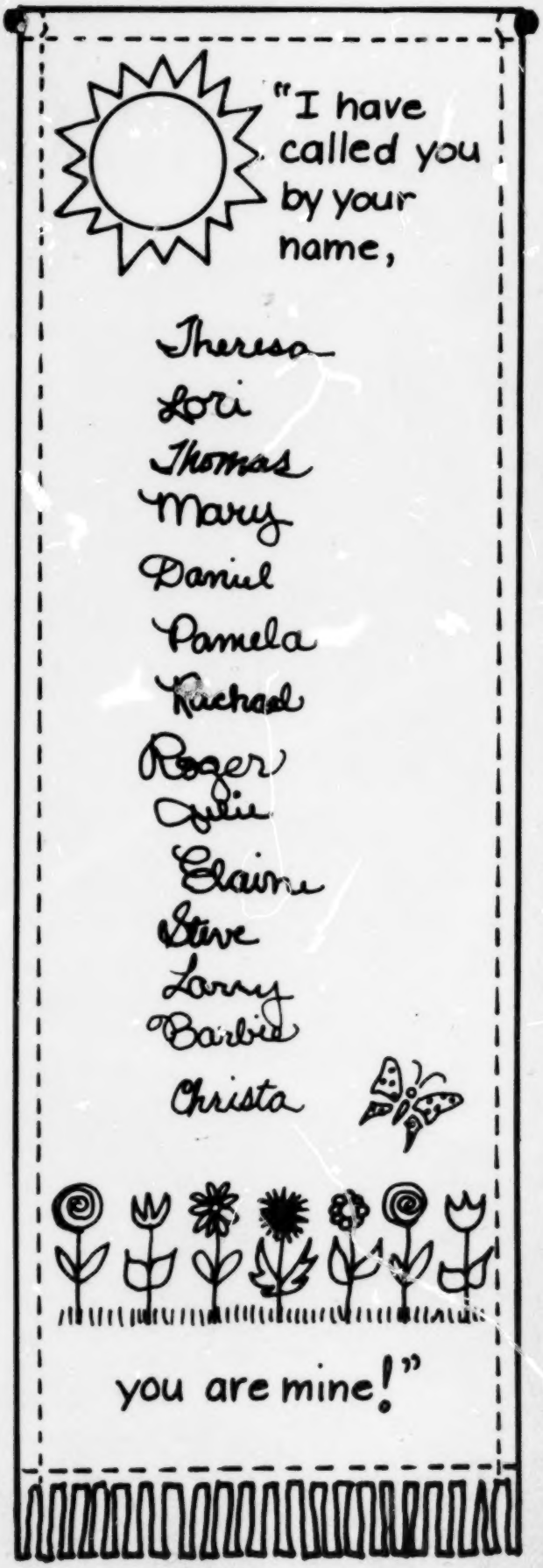
Eucharistic Prayer:
Eucharistic Prayer for Children is suggested

Communion Song:
"Whatsoever You Do," "Bread, Blessed and Broken" from *Day of the Son* album by the Dameans

After Communion:
Students may share poems on theme, act out a story, read reflections on discipleship.
Teacher from each class will go up and light the class candle representing their rainbow color, then go back and stand with class. Candles may be lit from Pascal candle.

Closing Song:
"Witness Song," from *Tell the World* album by the Dameans, "They Will Know We Are Christians." All process out with rainbow banners and candles.





sacramental preparation

Introduction

People tend to think in terms of their own life-span when judging the history of customs. For example, many persons regard free public education for all children to have existed from time immemorial. Actually, we have enjoyed this right in American democracy only since Horace Mann developed a system of free schools in Massachusetts in 1839. It has been a mere 140 years in which children in all levels of society have had the opportunity of education. During preceding centuries, education was available only to privileged classes—the titled, the influential, the wealthy. Tutors were employed to teach children of refined families the fine arts and social graces. The poor remained poor by being kept illiterate.

In Catholic education, the teaching ministry of Sisters and Brothers is also a recent phenomenon. Skilled and competent lay teachers and religious catechists perceive themselves as ministers who are called to assist children in a growth of developing discipleship. Parish communities devote themselves to fostering the potential in their youth, providing children with quality education and instruction in the basic principles of faith. Parents teach children respect, discipline, prayer, and love in an environment of family integrity in the home. Professional educators assist the parents with sound teaching methods and the latest materials. Parents and teachers have formed a partnership to pass on the rich tradition of Roman Catholic beliefs to youngsters.

In recent years, teaching methods have improved, discipline has become more humane, texts have kept abreast of the knowledge explosion, and audiovisuals have been invented to add impact to classroom lessons. However, parents still form a partnership with trained instructors, the classroom teacher is our finest resource, and our goal remains to transmit values and religious beliefs.

Parents and teachers are of paramount importance in the growth and development of children. Young children love their parents with devotion and awe. They model the example of faith and virtue that they see in their teachers. There is no estimate of the influence this partnership between home and school has upon a child in the formative years. Parents should be supported in their responsibility by the entire parish community. The process of education requires that we gather our finest talent and that we devote our resources to assist the parents in their privileged responsibility to deepen the child's life of faith. "The immense complexity of today's society makes this a truly awesome task. Without forgetting, then, that parents are 'the first to communicate the faith to their children and to educate them,' the Christian community must make a generous effort today to help them fulfill their duty." (U.S. Bishops Pastoral, *To Teach As Jesus Did*)

Parents must be especially supported by teachers and catechists at significant times during the child's growth in grace and understanding . . . times when the child is preparing for the first reception of the sacraments.

Sacraments are visible signs of God's love. He first revealed His love for all generations in the Covenant set with Abraham. He reinforced His promise with Moses and King David, and Himself became that promise of salvation fulfilled in Jesus. After the death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus left us the seven sacraments as reminders of God's concern for our individual redemption. He has revealed His fatherly affection through parents who are, themselves, a sacrament. Parents are the personal, human presence of God in His concern for us.

In their nuptial love, parents bring new life into the world. Because of their Christian faith, they offer that infant life to God at the child's Christening. As the child grows in awareness, experience, and understanding of God as Father, the child discovers God through parents who communicate the other sacraments during years of childhood development.

Parents have the right to educate their children as they think best. This involves the privilege of choosing the school program that most reflects their personal hopes and ambitions for the child. The parents are the ones who make prime decisions that will determine the child's growth in moral values and personal integrity. To assist in this responsibility, parents share their right with others in whom they have confidence—pastor, principal, instructors, religious education specialists, and elected parent representatives who advise and counsel.

Because of the variety of parent goals and standards, we depend upon these community leaders to develop a program of instruction that will meet the needs of the Church in her universal concern for children. Although parents will disagree from time to time with specific practices, they oblige themselves to cooperate with parish educational programs when it is apparent that the best interests of the children are being served. Parents depend upon trained professionals and elected representatives to maintain standards of excellence. They also depend upon the professionals to keep up-to-date with the bishops' directives on the moral guidance of children. After consultation about various viewpoints, individual parents and teachers submit their differences to the general good of the community and focus on the needs of the children.

As the child grows in grace and knowledge of the Lord, the sacraments received during the elementary school program of studies are milestones. They are properly spaced and spread through many years of development to allow for the child's thorough understanding and enjoyment of each sacrament, individually studied in each of the appropriate grades and ages of maturity. Lessons need time in order to be learned. Material has to be reviewed again and again, and instruction has to be varied so that permanent retention may take place. "Breathing" time has to be built into the sequence of sacramental programs to allow children opportunity to master concepts and to make those concepts come alive in faith through experience. If it were simply a matter of training, children could receive

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Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation within a short period of time. However, experience requires a gradual maturing and spiritual development over many levels of readiness.

The program of preparation for the Eucharist builds upon previous study and experiences of reconciliation, atonement, and contrition. Confirmation is administered at an age when the candidates are able to appreciate the personal responsibility involved in reaffirming their faith in Christ and their commitment to the community.

The aim of a parish sacramental preparation is to assist the child from age to age in becoming a *disciple* of Christ. To that end, many adults in the parish will work cooperatively to enhance the child's moral development:

the parent, as witness of faith
the teacher, as minister of the Gospel
the principal, as prophet who calls for deepening commitment
the pastor, as leaven in the process of growth in sacramental life

Eucharist

During the first two centuries of the Church, only adult converts were baptized. Infant Baptism was out of the question during the time of the persecutions because a profession of faith depended upon a mature understanding of the principal beliefs of Christianity. Furthermore, the sacrament of Baptism was combined with the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation; all three were considered as "the sacrament of initiation."

Through later centuries, a gradual development of seven distinct sacraments occurred. Infants and children were admitted to the Church in Baptism. However, Eucharist and Confirmation were held in reserve until the child had grown to young adulthood. Because of the efforts of Saint Pius X in this century, the proper age for the reception of Eucharist was lowered to an "age of reason." Custom has determined that minimum age to be around eight years or older.

The age of reason, however, should not be a chronological number of years in a child's growth. There is no magic moment between early childhood at age eight and the sudden coming of reason on the eighth birthday. The age of reason does not concern itself whether the child can compute, read well, sort facts, or demonstrate mastery of lessons. It is an approximate stage of development when a child begins to be able to make sense of basic religious beliefs. This will vary according to the individual, but the commonly accepted age is during the middle years of elementary school, Grades three to five.

There is a certain amount of learning, memorization, and preliminary experience that takes place before readiness for the Eucharist. Prayer and a concept of God as Father often prepare the child before ever beginning formal schooling. Parents are an example of a life of faith in the day-to-day model that they give to youngesters in the warmth and security of the home. Prayers are learned at the side of the bed; lifelong values already begin to take shape in the company of parents; both parents teach tenderness and compassion as they cradle a child in their arms. Valuable preparation such as this is built upon in the elementary programs of instruction and through opportunities in school for a variety of prayer experiences with children of one's same age. The teacher/catechist becomes an extension of the parent, not a parent-substitute. Parents continue to reinforce the efforts of instructors in moral development as they assist the child in expressions of faith.

If it were simply a matter of being able to distinguish sacramental bread from ordinary table bread, a very young child would be able to receive Eucharist. However, the concept of Eucharist has many levels to be explored and experienced during the years prior to first reception of this sacrament.

The Eucharist is at one and the same time a sacrifice and a community's meal. Christ is not only the priest who makes the offering; He is Himself the sacrifice which is offered. Although we individually receive the Eucharist, we do so during the celebration of a community of friends, family, and neighbors. We prepare for each reception of Eucharist by listening to the message of the Gospel. We offer our very selves in the preparation of the gifts of bread and wine. We dedicate ourselves to God with our "Amen," "So be it," as we receive the bread which is returned to us consecrated.

A child can understand these simple ideas if they are translated into words appropriate for youngsters. But the concept beyond the words is a *learned experience* . . . learned through sharing with others in school activities, practiced with the family in home celebrations at holiday times of the year, discovered daily in the love and communication around the supper table.

The richer the variety and number of such experiences that we can provide, the better is the child's appreciation of the tremendous gift that Christ left us at the Supper. The age of reason, the age of readiness, is more concerned with the quality of life experiences that gradually develop; it is more concerned than with textbook answers that may be learned but not retained. The more effective and abundant these experiences are before First Communion, the more likely that the child will see in the Eucharist a lifelong supply of spiritual nourishment. Our program of preparation is not so concerned with the child's readiness for *first* reception of the Eucharist as it is with the depth of appreciation that the child will bring to *each* communion.

With that goal in mind, preparation for the sacrament in primary grades is only the beginning of repeated preparedness for every reception of Eucharist. As the child grows, parents and teachers assist in the gradual process of a more mature awareness developing. Throughout the intermediate grades and the junior high level, the child will be continually offered experiences that enrich the basic understanding of Eucharist which was first learned in younger years. Preparation for the sacrament is not something that concerns us only during the course of any one grade; it is something that should be continually monitored in the home and in the classroom. Parents and teachers entrusted with the responsibility of shaping the gift of faith in a child should make every effort to this end.

In the early church of the first century, neighbors gathered at the large home of a friend to celebrate their faith. They listened as some eyewitnesses from Cana, the Mount, Jordan, and Jerusalem described stories about the message of the Teacher. They were inspired by the letters of Paul, as if he had written these messages to them. They remembered the meal of the Apostles and shared bread in the same manner. Gradually, the children were brought to the table as they grew in knowledge and grace.

Reconciliation

Confession of sin seems to be falling off as a practice among Catholic adults. Many feel that their sins are a matter of conscience, that God Himself forgives the individual in private prayer. Then why the sacrament? Why the emphasis on the community aspect of sin and forgiveness? Why prepare children for something they later may not value?

Reconciliation is more than confession, making a clean breast of faults. It is renewing, restoring a relationship. When we sin, we break that relationship in a number of ways: with God, with neighbor, with nature, and with self.

God does hear the penitent's contrition. He will forgive if that contrition is genuine. The penitent uses the sacrament of Reconciliation for atonement—to be "at-one" in these relationships again. There still are valuable effects of the sacrament.

Reconciliation is a situation in which the penitent and priest can celebrate the loving forgiveness of a God who is merciful, no matter how gravely wrong one is or how many times one does the same things over and over again. The sacrament is an opportunity for healing, for relief of guilt, for a personal word of encouragement. Reconciliation is a time of shared prayer and absolution. Wherever two are gathered in His name, Christ joins them in offering their prayer to His Father.

The role of priest/confessor has undergone change. He is not the judge and jury of another's offenses. He is the facilitator, the communicator of grace, the counselor, the proclaimer of forgiveness. Shouldn't the role of the penitent also undergo some change in basic attitude? Reconciliation should not be a situation to be *feared* but a time to be *freed*.

There should be an effort in examination of conscience to review the faults that have been frequent, disturbing, perhaps destructive of one's moral integrity. Identifying a general trend of faults is more growthful than rattling off a list of sins and frequency of sinning.

At some time during the confession of faults, there should be a genuine confession of faith—confidence in the sacrifice of the Cross and trust in the promise of the Resurrection. Children should be assisted in understanding that God is as much their parent as their own mothers and fathers. Like their parents, God has great love for them as individual persons. Like a parent, God wants the child to have all that is needed to grow. The greatest gift He has to offer a son and daughter is grace. Reconciliation should be a time to foster this awareness of God's love and to assist the child to open to the presence of grace.

The child should make an honest expression of intending to try to rise above weakness and fault. That's something to celebrate—not only that God is so loving that He accepts our contrition, but that we are so sincere as to want to really try to overcome our shortcomings.

In addition to the act of Reconciliation in the more formal manner of confession to a priest, there are also a number of ways of seeking God's forgiveness: sincere reflection during the penitential rite at Mass, through acts of human kindness and charity, by giving freely to the poor during moments of private prayers, and by reception of the other sacraments.

Surely, God can forgive a penitent who has sincere contrition. His forgiveness cannot be channeled only through the absolution of a priest. He hears the simplest of private prayer, the honest admission of fault. But, He has established the priest/confessor as His own human presence to the child. The sacrifice of atonement is proclaimed through the priest in a manner that should be comforting and meaningful. The sacrament of Reconciliation is an engagement between God the Father and His child, a presence that is made real to a child through the human warmth of the confessor.

There is no way that a person can make up for sin. Reparation is only possible because of the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Lord. We accept a penance in the sacrament of Reconciliation—a prayer to be said or an action to be performed—as a sign of our genuine sorrow for sin.

Children should be assisted in understanding a distinction between the fact of sin and the act of sin, a difference between sin and the sinner. We are responsible for our faults, but we are not the fault. We should be sorry for our sin and avoid wrong doing; but we are not ourselves the wrong that we do. Identifying sin as part of the sinner is a denial of one's worth and holiness. If a child can perceive what he *does* as wrong and what he *is* as good, he is enabled to distinguish between responsibility and guilt.

Confirmation

Each one of the sacraments is a communication of God's love for His chosen people. Through the medium of meaningful and visible signs, sacraments express an inner reality of the abiding presence of God with His people.

God continues to reveal His love throughout the history of a people He cherishes and calls His own. In the pre-Christian era God was present to the community in their knowledge of Him as a creator, Lord, Father and author of life. With the birth of Christ, God revealed Himself as human and divine, the savior from sin, the Son who redeems and offers new life to those who follow Him. At the resurrection Christ promised to send the consoler, the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit who nourishes the life of Christ in us.

It was not until Pentecost that the reality of the Trinity was understood. Since then, we have lived in the age of the Spirit. It is this third Person of the Trinity who abides with the Church, giving counsel and guidance, imparting grace to the holy people of God through the Church which is itself a living sacrament.

Confirmation along with Baptism and first reception of Eucharist, were considered parts of Initiation into the Christian community in the earliest years of the Church when only adults could be baptized. Through subsequent centuries, these three sacraments have been separated for the sake of better understanding and the distinct celebration appropriate to each one. Each sacrament is conferred on a child at maturing ages of readiness, in the individual times of greatest "disposition" to receive the particular grace of each sacrament.

Confirmation is not a final point of growth but, rather, one point on a continuum of maturing in the faith of the Church. It does not signal a coming of age in sacramental life, but it does signify a plateau that has been reached . . . a new beginning. Although maturity and commitment

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should be evident in the candidate. Confirmation is not a sacrament that marks passage from childhood to adulthood. It *is* a sacrament in which a child who is developing in grace and an awareness of spiritual relationship with God recommits self to a life which opens more and more to God. Confirmation is a mark of the growing understanding of discipleship, of what it means to be a follower who is dedicated to the Lord, Jesus.

Parents and godparents pledged this commitment on behalf of the child at Baptism because of their own gift of faith. They desired that their faith be passed to the one "Christened," the one anointed with oils signifying personal holiness and consecration by God. At the time of Confirmation, the child speaks of *personal* commitment, affirming those promises pledged long ago by others. What takes place is a reaffirmation of faith—in Christ, in His people the Church, and in the saving power of God.

The child rededicates self to the community, and so the sacrament of Confirmation is a *community* celebration. At the same time that an individual recipient is graced, the entire community is enriched. Confirmation is effective on two levels: the individual is gifted by God's love and the community is enhanced through charisms (gifts) of the Holy Spirit. These charisms are given to the one confirmed so that, through the confirmed, the community may be strengthened. Grace comes to the individual being confirmed; but, charisms are gifts that come *through* the individual to benefit both individual and the community. Thus, the influence of Confirmation is to effect grace individually and collectively.

To be a disciple of Christ, the child commits daily life to the message of the Gospel: love the Lord and love your neighbor as yourself. This discipleship is a lifelong process. It begins well before the candidate's year of preparation for Confirmation. It originates at Baptism and is nourished through the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Discipleship develops by means of the example of faith-filled parents who guide and counsel the child through stages of growing spirituality. Discipleship is developed through the instruction of teacher catechists who foster growth in knowledge and grace not only through what they teach but, also, through the lived example of their own discipleship and commitment.

Parents and teachers form a partnership that stimulates a child's motivation to follow the Lord. The child's self-motivation and genuine desire to be a disciple of Christ are prime responsibilities of parent and teacher and delicate qualities to nurture.

A disciple is one who is motivated to learn the teaching and to follow the example lived by the model person of a cause or movement. Disciples order their lives to that end displaying understanding and conviction in the principles of the person who is the perfect example. In early stages of discipleship, an individual is instructed by masters ("disciplined," so to speak) in the lifestyle of the person who is the perfect example of the philosophy taught. Gradually, this imposed discipline should give way to self-discipline, self-direction, as the follower matures and becomes confirmed in a set of convictions which are personally held as valuable.

The sacrament of Confirmation should be considered a highpoint, a milestone, in the stages of faith development as a child grows in personal convictions. It might be variously called the "Sacrament of Discipline" the "Sacrament of Discipleship," or the "Sacrament of Followship," for in Confirmation the candidate should be self-disciplined to make a personal choice for the Lord and a profession of faith.

Not unreasonably, the very goal of discipleship is practiced by students *during* the stages of preparation leading to a decisive commitment of Confirmation. The process begins at Baptism, but it should be especially visible during the final stage before reception of Confirmation. The model of the Lord Jesus was a life of prayer, concern, and service. Just so, the characteristic activity of those preparing for the sacrament should be prayerful moments and performance of service projects, in addition to study about Jesus and the Church.

At times when a parish celebrates Confirmation, the entire community should rejoice with the children and adults who are to be sealed by the Holy Spirit. The newly Confirmed join other followers of Christ in the fellowship of Christian community. Neophytes join master disciples in proclaiming God's love; together, they respond in love for one another. Confirmation expresses a mutual love and commitment. In this sacrament, youth take on a deeper responsibility and concern for neighbors, and the people of the parish respond with support and approval. So, too, God responds with sacramental love, offering charisms when the confirmed recommit their lives to following Christ and to a fuller participation in the faith community.

by Rev. Dave Byrne

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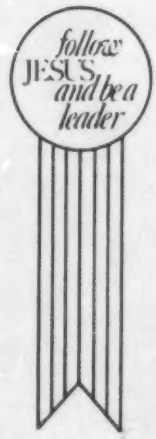
EDITORIAL NOTE: The sample prayer cards have been reproduced on one page.

PRAYER CARDS



Father, we thank you for Your love and for all You do for us. You give us life. You sent Jesus who showed us that He too loves us very much. Through His death and resurrection, He freed us and gave us the power to be His followers, His disciples.

Help us to learn about ourselves, each other, and our world. Help us to remember Jesus' love because following Him is not always easy. We wish to hear His call and follow His example more faithfully. We thank You for giving us this chance to be Your followers today. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you, Father, for sending us Your Son Jesus, who showed us how to live. He calls each one of us to be His disciple, His follower. May we listen carefully to His call. May we follow His example more faithfully at home, at school, and in all we do. Help us especially to love one another as Jesus loves us. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you, Jesus, for the love you share,
Your kindness, help, and daily care
We pray that we may be like you
At home, at school, in all we do.

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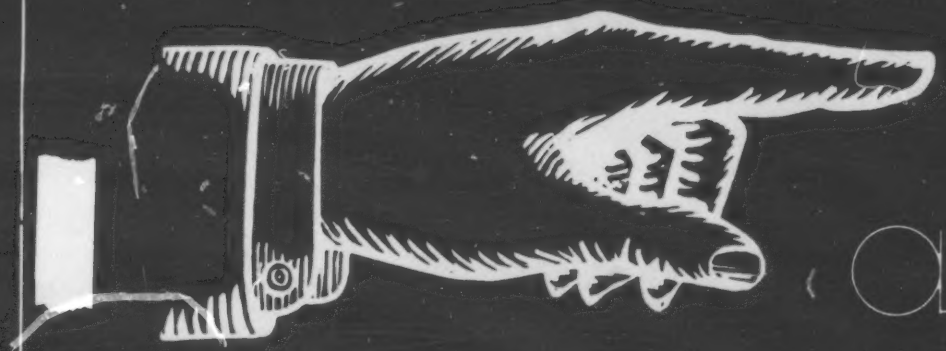
EDITORIAL NOTE: This is a reduced copy of Poster #1. The original was 11" by 17".

to be disciplined is to follow in a good way



to be self-disciplined is to follow in a better way

CORITA KENT

Poster #2. The original was 11" by 17".

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EDITORIAL NOTE: This is a reproduced copy of Poster #3. The original was 11" by17".

by this
love
you have for
one another
everyone will know
that you are
my disciples

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Quantity		Amount Per Item	Total
_____	**Student as Disciple Complete-Kits(s)**	$28.00	
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_____	Bag(s) of buttons-Time design (25 in bag)	6.25	
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_____	Slide/cassette component	24.00	
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Acknowledgements

Slide/cassette presentation
Sister Joan Sullivan, SSJ

Music
"Peace Song"/Mark J. Stenson
"In Your Presence"/Joni Byrne
©Ekklesia Music, Inc.
3750 S. Hillcrest Drive
Denver, CO 80237

Article, "The Student as Disciple"
Thomas J. Smith

Design of posters and buttons
Gerold & Vincent Designs

Copy for Poster #1
(Rule #5 from Corita's Rules for Teachers and Students)
Corita Kent

Student as Disciple logo
Sister Terry Davis, SND

Prayer services
Sister Sheila Fitzgerald, OP
Sister Stephanie Sanchez, CST
Thomas J. Smith

Scripture references
Brother Dominic Berardelli, FSC

Liturgical celebrations
Sheri Andrews
Sister Patty Beattie, OP
Christine Ito
Katherine Koelker
Mary Jo Pappas
Ann Pizelo
St. Louise School, Bellevue, WA

Sacramental preparation
Rev. Dave Byrne

Student prayers
Thomas J. Smith

Project Coordination
Sister Carleen Reck, SSND

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